

Top News

Many Oahu polls remain open past scheduled closing time

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The Manoa Elementary School cafeteria is packed with voters this morning. Patricia Aucheta, front, waited for her husband, Ben, and sons, Benjamin, 13, Adam, 11, and William, 9, to exit the booth after Ben finished voting.

Update: 8:30 p.m.

The second printout of election night results was released after 8:30 p.m. and includes 124 precincts accounting for about 57,000 ballots, elections officials said. The third

printout of election returns is expected at 10 p.m.

Update: 8:15 p.m.

All Oahu polls were closed by about 7:45 p.m. and the first printout of statewide elections were released a few minutes later. The results included 211,802 ballots, and contained 100 percent of the walk-in votes, a portion of mail-in ballots but nothing from today's polling sites, according to state elections officials.

Update: 7:40 p.m.

State elections officials are checking on 29 outstanding polling sites on Oahu to see if they are still open.

Update: 7:28 p.m.

Twenty-nine polling sites on Oahu are still open, including Lunalilo, Waipahu and Pope elementary schools, according to the state Office of Elections.

Update: 7 p.m.

Fifty-two polling places on Oahu were open at 7 p.m., an hour after the scheduled closing time, a state Elections Office spokeswoman said. All Neighbor Island sites are closed.

Any voter who was on line at 6 p.m. is allowed to vote.

Update: 6:15 p.m.

State Elections Office spokeswoman said 125 of Hawaii's 233 polling places across the islands were still open after their scheduled 6 p.m. closure, meaning a delay in getting the first return of election results tonight.

The first results of the night are now expected after 6:30 p.m., she said.

Officials blamed the delays on the two-page ballot that voters had to scan.

"It's double the length," state Chief Elections Officer Scott Nago said. "If voters don't study the ballot it takes them longer to answer the questions."

Update: 4:30 p.m.

Tonight's first election returns should come out around 6:30 p.m. and will include 100 percent of the walk-in votes, a portion of mail-in ballots but nothing from today's polling sites, said Nedielyn Bueno, spokeswoman for the state Office of Elections.

The second results are expected sometime after 8:30 p.m., she said, adding that they will include more mail-in ballots and a portion of the results from today's voting, she said.

Update: 2:47 p.m.

Nedielyn Bueno, spokesman for the state Office of Elections, said, "We did definitely experience a rush of voters this morning. It kind of leveled off in the afternoon and we'll see toward the end of the day because of people who may be trying to make it after work."

Registered voters who are in line at 6 p.m., when polling sites are scheduled to close, will still be allowed to vote. Typically, a poll worker would stand behind the last person in line.

Previous coverage

Long lines and sporadic scanning machine problems greeted many Hawaii voters who poured into the polls throughout the state today for the 2016 General Election.

"We've been non-stop since the doors opened," said Robyn Loudermilk, who oversaw voting operations at the Manoa Elementary School Cafeteria. "Excellent turnout."

Under mostly clear skies, Hawaii voters headed to the polls today to cast their ballots for president, Congress, and a slew of county and state offices and amendments. Polls opened at 7 a.m. and will remain open until the last person who is on line by the closing time of 6 p.m. votes. Voters can find their polling places, view sample ballots and get additional information at <http://elections.hawaii.gov/> or by calling 453-8683.

By mid-morning, turnout remained strong throughout Oahu, with waits of more than 40 minutes reported at Kamiloiki Elementary in East Oahu and Holomua Elementary in Ewa, and more than an hour at Kainalu Elementary in Kailua. Rather than waiting for the privacy of the voting booth, voters at some precincts were filling out their ballots at cafeteria tables and on the line for the scanning machine that records their vote. Volunteers were also running low on blue privacy folders in some precincts.

About 10:20 a.m. at the Manoa Elementary School Cafeteria, 21 private voting booths were occupied and more than a dozen people sat at long cafeteria tables filling out their ballots with their blue secrecy folders on hand. About a dozen more voters waited in line to feed their ballots into the scanning machine.

The electronic machine at Manoa Elementary malfunctioned and was down from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., adding to the wait for people casting paper ballots.

Standing in the shade outside the cafeteria, waiting for her husband to complete his ballot, Hilda Thomas said she voted for Hillary Clinton because she reminds her of herself at that age. A feminist, who has one adult granddaughter and six adult grandsons, the 89-year-old Thomas said she voted for Clinton because "I want her to have some security."

Overall, "This is a really hard election for everybody," she said.

At the Waipahu Intermediate School Cafeteria, Claire Au who lives two minutes away from the school prepared to cast her vote for Donald Trump. "I can't see Hillary being in office so I have to pick Trump," she said. "We need a change in America."

Waipahu resident Frances Diocares stood outside the doors of the Waipahu Intermediate School Cafeteria at 6:50 a.m., awaiting the opening of the polling site to cast her ballot.

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It's important to vote because otherwise the wrong people could end up in office, said Diocares, 24. "The ramifications could be very, very bad and that's an understatement."

To registered voters who are reluctant to cast their vote, Diocares said, "We should not take the right to vote lightly."

Polling places on Oahu have been running smoothly so far with the exception of a couple of sites that experienced issues with missing or malfunctioning equipment.

All 233 polling places statewide were scheduled to open at 7 a.m.

Nedielyn Bueno, spokeswoman of the Office of Election, said Kapunahala Elementary School in Kaneohe had yet to open as of 8 a.m. because poll workers couldn't locate the Hart eScan machine where voters feed paper ballots once they finish voting.

"We had to deploy a troubleshooter to send a replacement machine," she said.

Schools at times move the machine to a secure location and information isn't passed on to poll workers of its location.

The Office of Elections also reported malfunctioning eScan machines at Aiea High School and University of Hawaii Laboratory School today. At the Lab School, voters were told to leave their ballots in a box where they would be scanned later.

That wasn't good enough for one frustrated register voter, Jamie Swan, who left the polling site with her ballot in hand. "I think it's understandable. Machines can go down," she told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser. "I've got the day off from work, so I'll take care of what needs to be taken care of. So I'll bring it back."

Troubleshooters were sent to Aiea High and the UH Lab School to fix the problem.

Aside from the rainy weather, Hawaii County Clerk Stewart Maeda said operations have been relatively smooth at this time. Some polling sites in both East and West

Hawaii experienced problems with electronic voting machines this morning and has since been resolved. "All of our issues with our voting equipment is fine and people seemed to be voting with no problem."

Troubleshooters responded to machine problems at Waiakea High School, Ocean View Community Center and Mountain View Elementary School early today. Electronic machines at those sites have since been fixed or replaced.

Troubleshooters also responded an eScan machine that wasn't working properly at Kaumana Elementary School.

Some voters at a few polling sites in Maui County who missed the registration deadline wanted to register today. They gave some precinct chairpersons a difficult time because they felt they were being deprived to vote, said Maui County Clerk Danny Mateo.

Nevertheless, voter turnout has been steady. "It's pretty consistent," said Mateo adding he hopes to see a surge of voters later today.

Close to 750,000 people registered to vote in this year's general election. Of that, nearly 270,000 people cast their ballots by early walk-in or absentee voting by the Nov. 5 deadline. A total of 44,122 people took advantage of the early walk-in voting option, and 225,135 people mailed in their ballots with 157,605 returned absentee ballots.

Samuel Iokia, chairman of the 38-04 precinct at Waipahu Intermediate, said that, so far, operations were running smoothly this morning. Nine volunteers including Iokia arrived well before 7 a.m. to set up.

The National Weather Service said voters can expect some showers mostly for windward sections of Hawaii island and Maui County, while the other islands will see better conditions with light winds, an occasional shower and highs in the mid 80s.

Once at the polls, Hawaii voters finally get their say in the acrimonious presidential contest that has pitted Democrat Hillary Clinton against Republican Donald Trump.

For Congress, former U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, a Democrat, is running against Republican Shirlene Ostrov to replace the late U.S. Rep. Mark Takai, who died of cancer in July, in Hawaii's 1st Congressional District. The two-year term begins in January.

In an unusual simultaneous special election, Hanabusa is also running against Angela Kaaihue and others in a race for the two-month assignment to finish Takai's current term. Kaaihue is running as a Democrat in this race but as a Republican in the 2nd Congressional District against incumbent Democrat U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, who is heavily favored. Kaaihue has been rebuked by Hawaii Republicans and Democrats, alike, for her many comments against Japanese-Americans, Buddhists, and Hindus, and for pointing out that she is "cancer-free," an apparent reference to Takai.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz is also hoping to return to his seat, and facing a challenge from Republican John Carroll and others.

On Oahu, incumbent Mayor Kirk Caldwell faces former U.S. Rep. Charles Djou in a contest that has seen a late influx of PAC and Super PAC money on both sides.

And in the state Legislature, the lone Republican state senator, Sam Slom, who has held his seat for the last 20 years, is facing a challenge from Democrat Stanley Chang.

Voting results will be issued over the course of the night, starting soon after the last poll closes after 6 p.m., with updated numbers at about 8:30, 10 and 11:30 p.m., according to the state Office of Elections.

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The Associated Press and Star-Advertiser reporter Dave Reardon contributed to this report.